

REMARKS

In response to the Office Action dated January 4, 2008, Applicant hereby submits the foregoing amendments to the claims. Claims 1-29 currently are pending, with claims 6-20 withdrawn from further consideration as being drawn to a non-elected invention.

Reconsideration and allowance are requested, for the following reasons:

In the most recent Office Action, the Examiner maintained the rejection of claims 1, 3-5, 21, 23-26, 28 and 29 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over admitted prior art (“APA”) in view of Rozman (U.S. Patent No. 5,177,745), McGibney et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,112,322), and McClure (U.S. Patent No. 6,037,792); and the rejection of claims 2, 22 and 27 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being obvious over APA, Rozman, McGibney et al., McClure, and Fontana et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,982,677). In response, independent claims 1, 21 and 26 are amended herein to recite, *inter alia*, a circuit connected to the test mode circuit for receiving the test mode signal and outputting a test state indicating signal, and that either one of a monitor terminal (i.e., in claims 1 and 21) or pad (i.e., in claim 26) operates to output the test state indicating signal for confirming a test mode. It is respectfully submitted that the APA, Rozman, McGibney et al., McClure, and Fontana et al., whether considered individually or in combination, fail to render the presently claimed subject matter unpatentable.

In a nonvolatile semiconductor memory device according to the claimed subject matter, each of the memory devices of embodiments has a monitor terminal for outputting a test state indicating signal. The test state indicating signal is a signal that is output from a predetermined circuit (e.g., generally see Figs 2-4, portions row decoder 140, and test decoder 115) in response to and in accordance with receiving a signal outputted from a test mode circuit. As a result, each of the nonvolatile semiconductor memory devices according to the present inventions may provide confirmation that it is operating the predetermined circuit properly by monitoring the monitor terminal.

The Admitted prior art (“APA”) is clearly different from the presently claimed subject matter. It does not describe or suggest a monitor terminal, much less a circuit connected to the test mode circuit for receiving the test mode signal and outputting a test state indicating signal, as claimed. Accordingly, the APA fails to anticipate or render obvious the claimed invention.

The Rozman patent also fails to show, describe or suggest the claimed monitor terminal and other characteristics of the present invention described above. Thus, Rozman also is clearly different from the present invention.

Next, while the McClure patent shows a device pin 48 or test flag 54 or 72, the signal output to the device pin 48 or the test flag 54 or 72 is not a state of a signal corresponding to the signal outputted from the test mode circuit, as recited in the present claims. Additionally, McClure does not show the test mode signal and above character of the present invention. Thus, McClure is clearly different from the present invention.

With respect to McGibney et al., the Examiner asserts in the paragraph spanning pages 5 and 6 of the Office Action:

[I]t would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to have the row decoder connected to the test mode circuit of APA such that the row decoder would select and apply the excess voltage to all (as in McGibney), for the purpose of providing a greater flexibility for stress testing by being able to control the selection of the word lines, while preventing power surges (see for example McGibney column 2, line 47 through column 3, line 14).

However, the McGibney et al. patent does not show the monitor terminal for outputting a signal 404. Additionally, the signal 404 is not input to the decoder 402. Thus, McGibney et al. does not disclosure or suggest a circuit connected to the test mode circuit for receiving the test mode signal and outputting a test state indicating signal, and the monitor terminal as recited in independent claims 1, 21 and 26.

The Fontana et al. patent merely shows a structure of a regulator, and Fontana et al. does not show, describe or hint at the monitor terminal and circuit connected to the test mode circuit of the present invention. Thus, Fontana et al. is clearly different from the present invention.

For all these reasons, it is respectfully submitted that none of the cited document render obvious the presently claimed invention. Hence, withdrawal of the rejections of the claims and prompt allowance of the application are respectfully requested.

Dependent claims 2-5, 22-25 and 27-29 depend from one of independent claims 1, 21 or 26, and are therefore patentable over the cited documents for at least the same reasons as set forth above and for the separately patentable combinations of features recited therein.

If it is believed a telephone conference would expedite issuance of this application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned at the number provided below to arrange such a conference.

Respectfully submitted,

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